

## *YEARNING TO KNOW*

STEVE STOCKDALE

THE SCULPTURE on the cover graces the entrance to the Starpoint School on the campus of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. Founded in 1966 by Fort Worth entrepreneur M.J. Neeley and his wife Alice, the school was one of the first laboratory schools in the country for children with learning disabilities. The Neeley's young grandson had struggled with such impairment and the grandparents sought to provide a place for helping youngsters like him to learn, and for training teachers to specialize in meeting these unique needs.

Alice Neeley died in October 1986. Mr. Neeley and his daughters, Kathleen and Marian, felt a strong desire to honor her work on behalf of the Starpoint School. They decided to commission a sculpture and selected a favorite family photo as a model for the memorial. The photo, taken in the mid-1930s, captures Alice's mother, Mrs. Mary Brazelton Snead, reading to her then young granddaughters Kathleen and Marian.

When Mrs. Neeley died, Marian lived in the Bahamas. She knew of a "local legend" artist, Randolph Wardell Johnston, who worked on a nearby island at Little Harbour. She arranged for her father to meet the artist, and in 1987, Professor Johnston accepted Mr. Neeley's commission to create a life-sized bronze sculpture from the family photo.

“Yearning to Know,” as Mr. Neeley titled the work, was installed and dedicated at the entrance to the Starpoint School on October 28, 1990. It was Professor Johnston’s last commission. He died two years later, just shy of his 89th birthday. Mr. Neeley, six years older than Professor Johnston, died in 1996.

Also in 1990, Professor Johnston’s middle son, Paul Dennithorne Johnston, was named Executive Director for the International Society for General Semantics, then located in San Francisco, California. The Society published *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, in print since 1943. Paul later assumed editorial responsibility for the journal.

Following years of financial struggle, the Society merged with the Institute of General Semantics in January 2004 and relocated to Fort Worth. In September 2005, the Institute dedicated its new home, Read House, at 2260 College Avenue — just three miles east of the Starpoint School and “Yearning to Know.”

This issue of *ETC* marks Paul’s last as editor before he retires.

As the 40th anniversary of the Starpoint School coincides with Paul’s retirement, we’re honored to commemorate this accidental intersection of four generations of the Neeley family with two generations of Johnstons.

What better artistic depiction of the general semantics principle of *time-binding* than “Yearning to Know”?

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*Each invention leads to new inventions and each discovery to new discoveries; invention breeds invention, science begets science, the children of knowledge produce their kind in larger and larger families; the process goes on from decade to decade, from generation to generation ...*

— Alfred Korzybski, 1921

*Just as past and future are connected by an unbroken chain, so we have the responsibility towards future generations. We have inherited a moral imperative from our past to protect future generations and the world they will inhabit.*

— Randolph Wardell Johnston, 1969

Volume Sixty-Three  
Number Four • October 2006

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# ETC:

*A Review of General Semantics*

*et cetera*

